The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

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AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

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IDLE LAND IN AMERICA IS SERIOUS PROBLEM

New York, Dec. 29.—"Does shortage in coal production justify seizure of coal-producing lands? Well, then, why does not shortage in food production justify seizure of food-producing lands?"

These questions are asked by Albert Jay Nock, writing in the Century Magazine, current issue, on the land question.

"At this moment of hue and cry for increasing production," he says, "with the papers forecasting 'drastic' food control, 'drastic' rationing, 'drastic' measures against food hoarding and speculation, 'drastic' price fixing; when people spade up tennis courts and lawns, and even the poor, politically-exploited school children languidly poke about in the rubbish-laden vacant lots—at this moment there are 400,000,000 acres of idle land in the United States of America! Seventy-three per cent of the arable land of the country is therefore idle. Forty-five per cent of the actual laid-out farm land—nearly half—is idle!

"One feels like descending to the slang of the street and asking, Can you beat it? There is only one inference to make: anyone would make it. Drop a man down from the moon into the midst of that state of things and the moment he set eyes on it he would say, 'There is a country with a first-class problem of land tenure on its hands.'

"For approximately 30 years," continues Mr. Nock, "land in the United States, has not been priced according to its earning capacity, but according to its speculative value. Farm labor in the west has not been bought for farming purposes; bless you, no. Farming was never thought of except as bait on a prospectus. It was bought as an investment. From 1900 to 1910, for example, while available acreage in the United States increased 5 per cent, and the number of farmers increased a trifle under 11 per cent, the value of farm land increased 118 per cent.

"That tells the story so completely that any enlargement on it is mere verbiage. Three per cent of the population own nearly all the land values in the United States.

"As soon as one gets a sense of this clearly in mind there is no trouble about explaining this phenomenon of idle land. It seems like the acme of absurdity to say so, but as an industry there is not one cent of money in farming. All the profits are in the rise of land values. No matter, therefore, how great the pressure on production, no matter how much an increase of the food supply is needed, these immense stretches of land remain idle because it does not pay to cultivate them. They are held at monopoly prices so far ahead of their earning capacity that the capital charges eat up too much of the income.

"Farming as an industry is a failure. As an investment only has it any financial soundness. Probably one farmer in three is paying for the privilege of working his farm and trusting to the rise in land values to 'square' him in the long run. In fact, the land-holding monopoly of the west does not really want farmers or settlers. It asks for them, advertises for them, but only by a polite and well-understood fiction. What it really wants is customers, investors, and investors only have a chance of profit."

WARNS AGAINST CONTAGION.

Harrisburg, Pa., Dec. 29.—That the spread of diphtheria, scarlet fever, measles and other diseases among school children of 6 to 10 years is due in large measure to the almost criminal indifference of some parents to the rights of others was declared by representatives of the state health department.

"There are thousands of little head markers in the cemeteries of the United States which should bear this inscription, 'Died Because Some One Was Careless,'" said the health department. "Some parents scoff at measles, but the records show that few other diseases leave such an evil train of results. Pneumonia, tuberculosis, deafness, loss of sight and a generally weakened constitution easily follow measles. And in the face of this fact there are parents who, knowing that a child has measles, will treat the case themselves, make no report to a physician because they dislike the inconvenience of quarantine, send their other children to school, and send many little unfortunates to a life of pain or discomfort, or to their graves."

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS.

Washington, Dec. 29.—The United States public service reserve of the department of labor, issues a call for mechanics to help build 6,000,000 tons of shipping during 1918. It is estimated that 275,000 mechanics will be needed in producing this tonnage and 145,000 of these workers are yet to be found. It is stated that previous experience in building ships is not required, but the man must be qualified in some mechanical trade which can be used. "Any man who is a mechanic can find a place to work in a ship yard," it is stated.

Information can be secured from local agents of the reserve. Men who enroll are not placed under any obligation to go when called unless satisfied with wages and conditions. The public is urged to assist in making known this information.

FIREMEN'S STRIKE ENDS.

New Bedford, Mass., Dec. 29.—The strike of organized stationary firemen in the cotton mills has ended, the manufacturers agreeing to adopt a new schedule with 56 hours a week as the minimum and 63 hours as the maximum.

Boston, Dec. 29.—Stationary Firemen's union No. 3 is asking the Boston Elevated company to accept this new wage scale:

For firemen, $24 a week; water tenders, $22; oilers, $20. An eight-hour day and a six-day work week is included.

WOMEN FOR CAR CREWS.

Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 29.—The Kansas City Railways company is trying to develop a sentiment in favor of women conductors and advertises for women between the ages of 21 and 35 to come to its offices and apply for these positions. The company claims there is a shortage of men, but members of the Street Car Men's union deny this statement.

REED WORKERS ADVANCE.

Los Angeles, Cal., Dec. 29.—The Reed and Rattan Workers' union has reduced hours and increased wages after a two-months' strike. The work day is reduced from 10 to nine hours and wages are increased from $3 to $3.50 a day, with double time for Sunday and holiday work.

PLEADS FOR P. O. WORKERS.

Cleveland, Dec. 29.—"When a living, breathing human victim of injustice knocks very often at your front door, sometimes as often as twice a day, you are pretty near the Hun class if you sit back in solid comfort and refuse to be interested," says the Cleveland Press, in urging better conditions for postoffice employes.

"Does it ever strike you," says this paper, "that if great injustice is being done these faithful fellows, it's because of your indifference, your absorption in self?

"Now, don't try to dodge the responsibility. Don't try to satisfy yourself that it's up to congress. It is your congress, your money, your employes, nobody else's, and so the whole responsibility is yours.

"You have given them one increase in 40 years—just 16 years ago, when a dollar would go twice as far as it does now, as you well know. Their minimum wage is $2.22 per day, the maximum $3.33, or much less than you'd have to pay to get ordinary ditch diggers. And, at that, your postal employes have to work, on the average, nine years to get that maximum.

"While your postal employe is off duty through illness he is also off the pay roll. You grant him no pension. You make him buy his own uniform, the cost of which has advanced 50 per cent since you gave him that raise 10 years ago. You make him work long hours of overtime, but pay him the regular hourly wage for it. You work him so much nights that he has to sacrifice his social life with family and friends. When he has loyally stuck by the job for, say, 40 years and becomes unfitted for anything else, you 'turn him out to grass' himself, exclusively, to find the grass.

"That's the way you've been treating your postoffice clerks and letter carriers. And, last year, your postoffice department returned you a net surplus of $5,827,236.07!"

WANTS SCHOOLS TO GO ON.

Washington, Dec. 29.—President Wilson has written to the National Education association that he sees no reason why the association's annual meeting, in Pittsburg next summer, should be interfered with or that a cessation of school work should be contemplated.

Speaking as chairman of the woman's committee of the council of national defense, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw declared that absolutely nothing—coal shortage, war emergency or anything else—is an excuse for closing a single school. She called upon women of the nation to "rise and put an end to this menace at once."

"We have grown accustomed," said Dr. Shaw, "to pleas not to impose upon future generations the burden of a great war debt; but to my mind it is more imperative that we do not jeopardize the democracy for which we are fighting by imposing upon the future life of the nation an ignorant and illiterate citizenship which will become a greater menace to the liberties of the people than all the financial debt of war.

"We must avoid the mistakes of our war associates. England waited too long and has been forced to adopt rigorous measures to save her children. Let us begin now, before it is too late. The war has not yet called enough men to make it excusable to exploit our children."

PROFITS IN MUNITIONS.

New York, Dec. 29.—The American Brake Shoe and Foundry company reports a clear profit of $3,232,242 for the past fiscal year, an increase of $1,604,935 over the previous year's figures. This concern has just signed a contract with the government to manufacture 3,000 large-projectile cannon and 750,000 shells.

In his report to the stockholders President William G. Pearce says the directors "did not believe the company was justified in asking excessive profits," and that "it is believed that these contracts involve a minimum of risk to the company."

New York, Dec. 29.—Judge Mayer of the federal district court has ordered the Aetna Explosives company to pay $1,000,000 to two brokers who sued for three times that amount. One of the brokers negotiated a war munitions contract with the French government. The court refused to recognize other claims for commissions, because they were so large as to be "unconscionable."

HUNT WINS IN ARIZONA.

Phoenix, Ariz., Dec. 29.—The state supreme court has seated George W. Hunt as governor of this state. Hunt contested the election of Governor Campbell, who defeated Hunt, the then governor, by the small margin of 31 votes. The supreme court has unanimously upheld Hunt's claim of irregularity in the count. The successful contestant was first elected governor in 1911. During a strike of copper miners in the Clifton-Metcalf-Morenci district he refused to allow professional strikebreakers or gun men to enter Arizona. The workers won their strike. During the recent labor troubles in this state he has served as a representative of the federal government in the capacity of mediator.

TWO AWARDS POSSIBLE.

Harrisburg, Pa., Dec. 29.—Deputy Attorney General Hargest has notified the state workmen's compensation board that it can pay double compensation where an employe is injured and also totally disabled. This ruling was made in the case of a worker who lost both eyes and was otherwise injured. It was held that the loss of the eyes constitutes total disability. If the man can still work, however, he is entitled to compensation for his other injuries and then compensation for his eyes, the combined amount not to exceed $4,000, the maximum fixed by law.

LIABILITY FIRMS DIE HARD.

Columbus, Ohio, Dec. 29.—The recent ruling by Attorney General McGhee that private liability companies can not do business in this state, because of the Ohio workmen's compensation act, is not acceptable to these concerns. They have secured a temporary injunction against the state industrial commission and are now preparing to fight the ruling to the state supreme court, if necessary.

SECURE ONE YEAR CONTRACT.

Helena, Mont., Dec. 29.—Better working conditions and a one-year contract have been secured by several hundred employes of the Light and Railway company.

R. R. INCREASES WAGES.

St. Louis, Mo., Dec. 29.—The St. Louis Southwestern (Cotton Belt) railway has raised wages 7½ per cent for its railway clerks and telegraphers.

Low-Wage Employers Cry "Labor Shortage"

BY PRESIDENT GOMPERS, IN AMERICAN FEDERATIONIST.

An employer who can not at once secure the workers he needs even for temporary purposes, at once raises the cry of scarcity of labor. Employers who offer low wages and poor conditions find it difficult to secure sufficient workers and they proclaim a "labor shortage." Other employers who desire to employ workers with less skill, or those likely to be more tractable, such as women unaccustomed to organization for their own defense, utilize the plea of scarcity of workers as the reason for the innovation.

Some industries connected with war work have greatly increased their capacity to meet the present demands. Such industries as the logging camps, that have permitted miserable surroundings, housing, and provisions for their employes, now find it extremely difficult to secure a sufficient number of workers to meet the new expansion in their industries.

Men are unwilling to work for low wages and in degrading conditions at any time and particularly so when there are many opportunities for employment. Many of those who are closest in touch with the workers' side of the problem declare that no real scarcity of workers exists. They declare that the present condition is the result of maladjustment of workers and inadequacy of agencies to secure better adjustment.

In some trades, particularly the building trades, there are workmen out of employment. As the tendency is to discourage building operations and thus to release building materials for war needs, it is probable that even greater numbers of building tradesmen will be seeking employment.

A considerable part of the agitation about scarcity of workers is due to the professional interest of private employment agencies. Quite a considerable portion is due also to those interests that are trying to prepare the public mind to approve legislation for conscription work. A few papers with large circulations improve every possible opportunity for editorials upon the necessity for industrial conscription and for news articles furthering that general policy. As a matter of fact, the workers of this country are loyally doing their part for war production. They are fighting the battles of democracy, not only in foreign countries, but in our shops and mines and mills. A protest against industrial exploitation is in furtherance of American ideals of work and life. What America's workers are asking is a square deal and an opportunity to assist in war production with honesty and conviction.

Industrial conscription means loss of freedom to wage earners. Industrial conscription is incompatible with American institutions and with the spirit and purpose of the war.

The proposal has an appeal to those who do not consider very far below the surface of things. It seems to afford a method for the elimination of all friction and all interference with continuous production, but the way to enforce compulsory work has never been found. Wherever industrial conscription has been tried in foreign countries as a war measure, it has proved a failure. Great Britain has warned us against the measure. But discussion of conscription is not the real problem. The problem is to establish co-operation between all forces to secure necessary production.

In the last analysis the fate of the present war rests upon production. Those countries that shall be able to organize production upon such a basis that their output will exceed the waste in the war will be the victors. Production is no longer a problem that can be isolated from the rest of the national life. It is a nation-wide problem that involves every inhabitant in the country, every resource and particle of wealth. All must be mobilized in the most intelligent way for co-operation in production. One of the fundamental labor war problems, therefore, is the problem of adjustment. Adjustment agencies must be national in scope and must be in intimate touch with both employers and employed. In other words, these adjustment agencies must be composed of representatives of the government, of employers, and of employes. The national machine is dependent upon local co-operation. This work clearly comes under the province of the department of labor.

For some time the department has been trying to deal with the problem, but has been exceedingly hampered by inadequate appropriations made by congress. During the last congress, the department asked for an appropriation of $750,000 for this purpose. Congress granted them only $250,000 for this, which is one of the most important war problems. The department, however, is preparing to do its best within the limits of that appropriation. Organized labor has done and will do its full share to co-operate.

EIGHT-HOUR DAY PAYS, STANDARD OIL FINDS

Washington, Dec. 29.—The Standard Oil Company of California finds that the eight-hour day is a money-maker and that its production is increased under this system.

United States Senator Phelan, of California, made this statement to the senate last week. He said that a representative of the federal department of labor asked this company what was the result of its eight-hour day and a minimum wage of $4 a day.

"The representative was informed," said Senator Phelan, "that Standard Oil, over a period of nine months on which they made observations, actually increased its output at less cost. There was a greater efficiency by having three shorter shifts by better paid men—the oil wells were working for the entire 24 hours, having three shifts of eight hours each—than by having but two longer shifts; and the increase of wages has well justified the change that they made, improving their own condition, bettering the condition likewise of the worker.

"These facts were ascertained during the investigation just had last month in California for the purpose of inducing other corporations to go and do likewise."

TWELVE GIRLS BURNED; FACTORY MANAGER FREE

Albany, N. Y., Dec. 29.—Governor Whitman has pardoned Samuel Barkin, who was proprietor of the Diamond candy factory in Brooklyn, which was burned in November, 1914. Twelve girls lost their lives. They were caught behind a barred fire door.

Barkin was arrested for violation of the state factory laws relating to exits. He was convicted of second degree manslaughter and last January was sentenced to not less than two and one-half years and not more than five and one-half years in Sing Sing prison.

DOLLAR VALUE REDUCED.

Washington, Dec. 29.—The 1907 dollar is worth 50 cents today, according to a report of the federal bureau of labor statistics, which compiled statistics for local policemen to aid them in their higher-wage campaign.

In July, 1907, according to the figures, you could get 5.5 pounds of good sirloin steak for $1, whereas in November, 1917, only 2.8 pounds was handed you in exchange for your dollar.

The dollar is equally as weak when it comes to butter, the figures showing that 3.1 pounds was a dollar's worth in July, 1907, and 1.9 pounds in November, 1917.

Corn meal has soared, too, from 47.6 pounds for a dollar in July, 1907, to 14.9 pounds in November, 1917.

Other foodstuffs have gone up by leaps and bounds.

ONLY 71 LOST ON SHIPS.

Washington, Dec. 29.—Only 71 passengers lost out of more than 300,000,000 carried on American ships during the fiscal year ending June 30, the annual report of the steamboat inspection service shows.

The total of deaths on American vessels, including those who went down with torpedoed merchant craft, was 592, but suicides and accidental drownings accounted for 210 of these. The year's total was 684 less than that of the previous year, when 800 persons were lost on the steamer Eastland, at Chicago.

WOMAN AS WEIGHMASTER.

Mount Carmel, Pa., Dec. 29.—The Susquehanna Collieries company has appointed the first woman weighmaster in the anthracite region. The company has given notice that it will receive applications from women for positions in other departments.

The claim for this innovation is "scarcity of labor," although miners are leaving this industry because of short time due to a shortage of cars.

CAR MEN RAISE WAGES.

Jacksonville, Fla., Dec. 29.—The Brotherhood of Railway Car Men has secured a 10 per cent wage increase and an agreement from the Florida East Coast railroad, the first since the strike of several years ago.

ATLANTA RAISES WAGES.

Atlanta, Ga., Dec. 29.—The city council has raised wages $10 a month for municipal employes who receive $125 a month or less. There are 1,448 employes of this class on the city pay rolls.

SHIP YARD WORKERS GAIN.

Washington, Dec. 29.—Representatives of the navy department, federal shipping board, A. F. of L. metal trades department and Pacific coast ship yard workers have adjusted wage differences of west coast ship yard workers.

Last summer these workers demanded a $6 rate and the shipping board sent an adjustment commission to the Pacific coast. An award of $5.25 was made. This award was protested by the workers, who also showed that several crafts, including steam engineers, firemen, oilers, water tenders, asbestos workers, metal polishers and structural iron workers, were overlooked.

As a result rates are increased 10 per cent over the adjustment commission's decision, making the Pacific coast wage $5.80 instead of $5.25. On Feb. 1 the adjustment commission will investigate living costs in that section and if it is shown that these costs are in excess of the 10 per cent, an award totaling the difference will be made.

The award was signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt, acting secretary of the navy; representatives of the shipping board and the federal department of labor and James O'Connell, president of the A. F. of L. metal trades department; J. A. Franklin, president of the Brotherhood of Boiler Makers, and John I. Nolan, member of the executive board of the International Iron Molders' union, representing Joseph Valentine, president.

WHY BONUS PLAN PAYS.

New York, Dec. 29.—The belief that a bonus to workers is the result of sentiment is given a rude shock by the following, taken from the financial page of the New York Times:

"The popular impression that the annual bonus which a great many financial institutions are in the habit of giving to their employes at the end of the year is in the nature of something for nothing, a free-will offering topping a liberal salary, is wrong. The bonus originated as a profit-sharing scheme to reward clerks for extra tasks imposed upon them in busy seasons and not contemplated when their wages were fixed. The Wall street employe must take the lean with the fat, which means that he must cheerfully miss his regular train home night after night for so long as business runs above normal. When business is good he works many hours overtime, and his year-end gift is large; when times are dull he shares part of the cost by receiving a smaller bonus. A banker who has always urged upon his directors the distribution of liberal sums each Christmas says that as a result he almost never loses an employe, and can get more work done in an emergency than he has any right to expect from a force twice as large."

WANT CHINESE LABOR.

San Francisco, Dec. 29.—At a hearing conducted by the state railroad commission to ascertain the transportation conditions in California, officials of the Southern Pacific railroad said the road bed was "run down" because of the failure to secure "lack of skilled and unskilled labor at wages which the railroad can afford to pay."

The solution, according to these officials, is not to raise wages, but to have the government permit the admission of Mexican and Chinese labor regardless of immigration laws.

Last year this company produced profits of over 12 per cent to its stockholders. This is a gain of 2.63 per cent over the previous year. Including "water," Southern Pacific has outstanding stock of nearly a third of a billion dollars.

ARMY BILL FIVE BILLIONS.

Washington, Dec. 29.—The army appropriation bill for the next fiscal year, on which the house military committee will resume hearings January 2, probably will carry close to $5,000,000,000 for the whole military establishment, exclusive of fortifications and field artillery guns, which will be provided for by the appropriations committee. The bill is expected to be ready about February 1.

The total army appropriation estimates sent to congress by the war department aggregates $6,610,000,000.

EVADE COLD STORAGE LAW.

East St. Louis, Ill., Dec. 29.—As a result of federal and state inspection officials of Swift and company, meat packers, are charged with evading legislation which provides that products in cold storage shall be stamped. The prosecution says:

"Failure of packers to properly stamp butter and eggs sold to grocers, permits their sale as fresh products for a price above their real value."

CIGAR MAKERS WIN.

Boston, Dec. 29.—Two thousand organized cigar makers have raised wages as the result of a strike. On 10-cent cigars rates will be increased $1 a thousand. On 5-cent goods, the increase will be 50 cents, and 2 1-2 cents for packers.

WARNS PROFITEERS.

Tallahassee, Fla., Dec. 29.—A final warning to retail grocers who are guilty of profiteering has been issued by Brayton Beacham, food administrator. The next offender reported will be "jailed instantly," he says.

LEAVING P. O. SERVICE.

Philadelphia, Dec. 29.—In an interview in the Public Ledger Gilbert Hyatt, president of the National Federation of Postal Employes, said that Postmaster General Burleson "has driven so many competent men from the service that it has fallen to pieces. The civil service lists no longer supply the department and men are being hired through the ordinary channels. The postal service requires competent and trained men. New men are little better than none at all until they are trained. That is one reason for the poor service today.

"Mr. Burleson has adopted an attitude toward his subordinates which strikes us as more autocratic than most big private employers of labor would dare to adopt. Under his administration intimidation and coercion have been practiced against the common employes all over the country. Under his administration to complain means to suffer reprisals.

"His bitter denial of the right of his subordinates to organize for their own benefit and his constant refusal to even see, much less deal with the elected representatives of these subordinates, have infuriated the thinking men among the postal employes.

"From the standpoint of the A. F. of L. his attitude has been profitable, for it has served to weld the old individual organizations of postal employes into a single body, affiliated with the A. F. of L., prepared to appeal to congress for relief and for justice.

"Burleson's expressed labor policy is in such direct opposition to the policy of President Wilson, expressed at the recent convention of the A. F. of L., that we believe the president will see the necessity of a new policy in the postoffice department when the facts are laid before him."

TOO MANY POTATOES EATEN.

Harrisburg, Pa., Dec. 29.—People in this state eat too many potatoes, says Dr. Dixon, Pennsylvania's health commissioner.

"Most of our foodstuffs are made up of different constituents," he says. "A potato is largely composed of starch, whereas beefsteak is largely composed of nitrogen or protein. Starch represents so many heat-producing units, and beefsteak likewise produces its own quota. This is so when you consider the matter from a laboratory standpoint, but if you made a test of the same values by feeding these foods to human beings, you would find the values varied greatly because of the variations of the human or organic machinery which handled them.

"The people of this state eat too much potato. The large proportion of starch in the composition of this vegetable produces a catarrhal condition of the digestive tract, which interferes with digestion and leaves the patient insufficiently nourished, eventually over a long series of years producing starvation. Meat, as a rule, is also overeaten by Pennsylvanians. Just now, however, during the tension of war we need more meat than usual."

FAVORS PENSION LAW.

Washington, Dec. 29. — Continued failure by congress to enact legislation for government employes will result in the federal census bureau having, within the next 10 or 15 years, a large number of employes whose efficiency will be impaired because of advanced age, says Director Rogers in his annual report.

"It is hoped congress will provide a retirement system before the bureau's force reaches this condition," he adds.

There is no serious loss of efficiency in the bureau at this time, due to aged workers, the director says, since at present only 27 employes, or 5 per cent of the force, are over 65 years of age. However, 181 employes or 32 per cent of the force are over 50 years of age, and the passage of 10 or 15 years will tell another tale.

EXPLOSION IS COSTLY.

Jersey City, N. J., Dec. 29.—A glass insurance company has won its suit for damages against the Lehigh Valley railroad as a result of an explosion of war munitions at Black Tom, on July 30, last year. The suit was to recover on 600 claims aggregating over $22,000. The company put in no defense to the charge that it was not cautious in handling these explosives. The verdict is looked upon as a test in other suits for claims estimated to aggregate $30,000,000.

WIN TELEPHONE STRIKE.

Jacksonville, Fla., Dec. 29.—Telephone girls won their strike against the Southern Bell Telephone company, which has promised time and one-half for overtime and two rest periods a day. The girls were unorganized when they suspended work, but quickly organized and affiliated with the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

FARMS LOANS $29,824,000.

Washington, Dec. 29.—Loans aggregating $29,824,000 have been made to farmers by the 12 federal land banks in the six months since the farm loan system has been in full operation, according to the monthly report of the federal farm loan board.

POSTAL EMPLOYES IN LINE.

Washington, Dec. 29.—The Railway Mail association is the lastest postal organization to affiliate with the A. F. of L.

Night Work in Meat Plants For Women After Day's Work At Home with Their Babes

Washington, Dec. 29.—Miss Mary McDowell, chairman of the committee on foreign-born women of the council of national defense, reports that women are being employed at night work in large packing plants after their day of labor at home, with the result that many of them obtain only one hour of sleep in the 24. She says she has induced the packers not to employ women with children under 6 years of age for night work.

STOCKYARDS' DISPUTE SETTLED BY MEDIATION

Chicago, Dec. 29.—A strike of 40,000 stockyards and packing house employes has been averted by the packers accepting arbitration. The president's mediation commission assisted in the negotiations.

Chicago trade unionists have conducted an organization campaign among these workers for several weeks, and have succeeded in unionizing large numbers of them. The packers have refused to recognize representatives of their employes and a delegation of trade unionists went to Washington to impress the government with the seriousness of a situation that was liable to spread throughout the country. This delegation included President Hart of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen; Victor Olander, secretary of the Illinois state federation of labor, and President Fitzpatrick and Secretary Nockels of the Chicago federation of labor. Secretary of War Baker asked the president's commission to investigate this dispute on its return to Washington from the far west.

Washington, Dec. 29.—A. F. of L. Secretary Frank Morrison has received the following telegram from John Fitzpatrick, president of the Chicago federation of labor, relative to the settlement of the dispute with packing house employers in that city:

"We submitted an arbitration agreement to the president's mediation commission, in which John E. Williams is named as arbitrator. The commission accepted the agreement, and the packers agreed to it, which means that all our demands shall be arbitrated. We consider this a splendid victory, with due credit to your hearty and active co-operation."

LEATHER WORKERS WIN.

Chattanooga, Tenn., Dec. 29.—Over a year ago the Southern Saddlery company locked out its employes because they organized, and now this concern has signed a contract with W. E. Bryan, president of the United Leather Workers' International union.

While the leather workers are elated over the successful outcome of their long struggle, they recall that the Southern Saddlery company has not handled many government contracts since the war started.

The navy department, the organized leather workers and 90 per cent of leather manufacturers in this country have reached an agreement whereby strikes will be avoided. These manufacturers and their employes are guaranteed against industrial shut downs while the war lasts, and the government, naturally, patronizes manufacturers who can "produce the goods," with skilled workers.

The Southern Saddlery company has not been blind to these conditions, and has concluded to abandon its anti-union policy.

DEFINES "EDUCATION."

New York, Dec. 29.—In ruling that the Socialist party is not an "educational institution" within the meaning of the war tax act, and that paid admissions to meetings held under its auspices are taxable, Mark Eisner, internal revenue collector, gives this definition of the term "education:"

"To educate means something more than merely to impart information. It implies the training of faculties and the improvement and stimulation of moral, physical and intellectual character. The mere dissemination of information would make a newspaper an educational institution."

PRIVATE DETECTIVE HELD.

Philadelphia, Dec. 29.—Samuel G. Maloney, head of a private detective agency, has been indicted by the grand jury on charges of conspiracy to murder and to prevent a free and fair election. This indictment is the result of election scandals last September when a policeman was murdered by a New York gun man who has been sentenced to prison for a long term.

FACTORY GIRLS WIN STRIKE.

Mahanoy City, Pa., Dec. 29.—Union textile girls have won their two-months' strike. The union is recognized, wages are increased 20 per cent, with time and one-half for overtime. No girl will be discriminated against because of union activity.

"Anti-Union Employers Repudiated By Australia's Conscription Vote"

—A. F. OF L., SECRETARY MORRISON.

Washington, Dec. 29.—"Press reports that Australia has defeated military conscription by a referendum vote is not surprising to those who have followed events in that country," said Frank Morrison, secretary of the A. F. of L.

"Behind the conscription agitation were employers who have divided the Australian Labor party and who are now attempting to destroy the trade union movement. The workers refused to listen to these war-mad profiteers. Australia has made history in this war. The number of her enlistments, the conduct of her soldiers in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign and her increased production at home, with a less number of workers, as verified recently by the commonwealth statistician, refutes the claim that these workers are opposed to the war.

"Australian employers are drunk with power. This is shown by their call during the conscription campaign for a general blacklist of strikers. At this meeting, of the interstate employers' federation conference, held in Melbourne, it was resolved:

"'That, in the opinion of this conference the more effective organization of employers throughout the commonwealth is necessary for the protection of their industrial interests, and this conference therefore recommends the establishment in each state of employers' industrial disputes councils for the purpose of dealing with industrial disputes arising in any section of industry, so that men, while on strike from one employer, shall not get work from another employer. It is suggested that a system of issuing discharge cards should be introduced, stating shortly the reasons for such discharge.'

"This plan, which was recently abandoned by the Lake Carriers' association in our own country after an investigation by the government, indicates the spirit of Australian employers, whom workers charge with being more interested in the destruction of trade unionism and the eventual establishment of industrial conscription than they are in winning the war.

"In opposing conscription, the workers took the government's own figures to show that the voluntary system has not broken down. It was shown that the total enlistments is 330,000 and the gross casualties, 112,000. Accepting the casualties as net, there yet remains 168,000, with a total enlistment, the past 10 months, of 40,000. In other words, the workers show by the figures of the conscriptionists themselves that more men have volunteered than is necessary to fill the ranks because of losses of all kinds.

"It is reported that New South Wales opposed conscription by a majority of more than 136,000. In this state the workers have just been defeated in a general strike called to compel the government to abide by its promise not to change working standards during the war. By this it was understood that wages would keep pace with the increased cost of living and that laws for the benefit of labor would not be repealed. After the labor party lost control of New South Wales the new government made this promise and later attempted to install the Taylor system on its state-owned railroads. The strike extended to other states, and the workers' defeat in this just cause still rankles.

"The Australian situation is economic rather than military, for the workers are just as emphatic for the war as are the conscriptionists. And the workers have proved their patriotism by going to the front, while their opponents are making money at home and telling how the war should be won.

"The reported result of the conscription vote should be a notice to employers everywhere that patriotic appeals will not conceal their hostility to the trade union."

NO CARS MEANS NO COAL.

Washington, Dec. 29.—The federal trade commission blames the coal shortage to faulty car distribution. It is stated that with the market at unheard-of-prices labor is often standing idle at the mines and production is limited as compared with the possible productive capacity. The commission says:

"We find that mine labor is being disorganized by reason of irregular employment and forced idleness, and that in some fields bituminous mines are working only three or four days a week and that willing labor and willing operators are standing idle half the time.

"In other fields where there is now a more nearly adequate car supply the irregularity of car supply in months past has so disorganized and discouraged labor that these mines are not now nearly at full capacity of production. The irregularity and uncertainty of employment has caused the miners to be tempted to leave the mines and go into other employment, and, having left, it is difficult to bring them back.

"The commission believes that there are enough coal cars in the country, but that there are not enough coal cars delivered to the mines, and that an inadequate supply having been delivered to the mines and loaded, these cars are not moved to the point of consumption either with the greatest of expedition, nor are they promptly discharged upon their arrival at their destination."

COOLIES NOT NEEDED.

San Francisco, Dec. 29.—"California does not need immigrants of the coolie type, from Japan, China, or elsewhere," says Editor Barry of the Star.

"The question of importing Oriental labor was bitterly fought out in this state many years ago, but certain interests have never given up hope that in some way or other the emphatically expressed will of the people might be evaded or annulled. Now the war has given them a specious argument, and at once the cry is raised that we must have Chinese labor 'for the period of the war.'

"Only a few months ago a great hue and cry was raised over a supposed labor shortage in this and other states, but investigation by United States and state officials showed that the facts were greatly exaggerated.

"It was shown that the real problem was of distribution, more particularly as to seasonal labor, and, in this state, efforts were made to secure the co-operation of the farmers in shifting labor from place to place as it was required."

INK SUPPLY IS HIT.

New York, Dec. 29.—Demoralization of the printing ink industry is threatened by the embargo on the shipment of carbon black, a principal ingredient, ordered some time ago by the government, and publishers of newspapers, magazines and all other users of printing ink soon will be vitally affected, says officers of the national association of printing ink manufacturers.

In a letter to President Wilson it is stated that "if we do not get immediate relief there will be no ink for daily papers or publications of any kind nor for any commercial purpose whatever."

CHILDREN ARE UNDERFED.

New York, Dec. 29.—More than one-eighth of all school children in this city are underfed and one-quarter of them are in need of medical care, according to city health inspectors, who have just completed an examination of the children in all the schools. The health authorities find that malnutrition of children constitutes a serious health problem, and one that is now more clearly recognized.

WAGE LAW UPHELD

St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 29.—The Minnesota minimum wage law, affecting women and minors in industries, has been declared constitutional by the state supreme court. Under this law a commission fixed a minimum wage of $8.50 and $8.25, permitting a range in certain second, third and fourth-class cities.

RURAL CARRIER QUITS.

Lake Odessa, Mich., Dec. 29.—Lester M. Campbell, rural mail carrier, has resigned. He says the government's wage rate for this work does not meet increased living costs.

DENIES ARMY SNOBBERY.

Washington, Dec. 29.—Snobbery is not an army characteristic or is it tolerated, writes Secretary of War Baker in answer to a senate resolution of inquiry on this subject.

Frequently in a country like this, the secretary said, the advantage of education and culture is in favor of the soldier. Nevertheless safety demands that the soldier and officer acquire, by continuous and unvarying practice, the habit of instant obedience to his superior.

"In the emergency of battle, when every condition tends to distract men's attention and peril is on every side, safety for a command frequently lies only in its organized and co-ordinated activity, and this can proceed from one inspiration alone—the instant, unquestioning compliance by all with the voice of authority. There is no time to debate; no opportunity to consider. The men must have acquired their rule of action—attention on, obedience to command. This habit cannot be created in emergency and forgotten under other circumstances, but must result from practice which tolerates no exceptions, either of persons or occasions.

"The relationship between officers and men, therefore, must be so arranged as to lead to this indispensable result, but this is entirely consistent with respect, sympathy and mutual consideration, and the best officers are those who have most completely won the affection of their men.

"While here and there instances undoubtedly occur of thoughtless and inconsiderate conduct on the part of officers and of unreasoning complaint on the part of the men who have failed to understand the just obligations of this disciplinary relationship, I am still persuaded that in the great army we now have in the field and in training there is a growing realization that it is both possible and useful to be faithful to military discipline and at the same time to the democratic ideals of our country."

U. S. POOR EMPLOYER.

Washington, Dec. 29.—'Shall the nation's capital become a national sweatshop?' asks the Washington Herald in an editorial calling attention to low wages received by government employes.

"Uncle Sam is becoming the worst employer in the country, at a time, too, when workers in all other lines have been bettering their conditions, or at least striving to keep up with the cost of living," says this paper.

"Families of government employes in Washington are only able to live by the combined labor of all the members. Mothers and daughters must go out of the home to work. Nearly every government employe is doing extra work or trying to obtain it. Many serve as ushers in movie shows, as night watchmen, as sweepers and cleaners. The richest government on earth is deliberately sweating its servants and playing the part of a parasite—leaving to others the burden of partly supporting them."

FOOD TO SOLDIERS SPOIL.

Washington, Dec. 29.—The council of national defense requests friends and families of soldiers not to send them food. An abundant supply is being furnished in the camps and cantonments, the statement said, and a large quantity of privately sent food is being wasted. In some cases the food has been spoiled on account of having been conveyed long distances in heated express or mail cars.

INVENTS NEW TERM.

Washington, Dec. 29.—Secretary of the Navy Daniels has invented a new war term.

Testifying before a congressional committee, he made this statement in his reference to certain contractors:

"There have been a few whom we have had to take by the nape of the neck; they came in saying they wanted to do their bit, but really what they wanted was to take their bite."

1,421,000 WORK WOMEN.

London, England, Dec. 29.—Since the war started 1,421,000 English women have entered paid employment, according to a government report. There are 202,000 in government departments, [illegible] in the transport systems, [illegible] in banking, [illegible] in industries, and [illegible] in commerce.

49 PER CENT DIVIDENDS.

New York, Dec. 29.—The Central Trust company has declared an extra dividend of 25 per cent as well as the regular quarterly dividend of 6 per cent, making a total of 49 per cent for these stockholders during the year. Last year this corporation paid the same dividend.